

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached formal drawing sheet replaces the original sheet of formal drawings.

Fig. 2: Add arrows to the end of each line corresponding to labels "A" through "P" and the parameters which those letters indicate.

Attachment: Replacement Drawing Sheet (1 sheet)

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2 and 4-10 are pending in the application. Claims 1, 2, 4 and 10 were amended to incorporate the limitation of "the vent is provided inside said fixed shaft" from dependant claims 2 and 4 into amended independent claims 1 and 10, respectively. For at least the reasons set forth below, withdrawal of all outstanding rejections and objections is respectfully requested.

35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, rejection

Claims 1-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. The Examiner states that the phrases "the joint" and "spaces around the joint" in claims 1 and 10 lack clear antecedent basis within the claims; i.e. either the particularly recited passage fails to be properly introduced prior to its appearance at that point in the claim or the structure recited in the passage is not an inherent part of or component of other previously recited structures.

Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's position that "the joint" is not an inherent part of or component of other previously recited structures. However, to advance prosecution of the application, all instances of "the joint" in the claims were changed to read "a joint" which also accurately describes this element. Accordingly, withdrawal of these rejections is respectfully requested.

Drawings and Specification Objection

In response to the Examiner's drawing objection, arrows were added to the end of each line in Figure 2 corresponding to labels "A" through "P" and the parameters which those letters indicate.

The title of the invention was amended to be more descriptive.

Prior Art Rejections

Claims 1, 3 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,059,459 (Ichiyama).

Claims 1, 3 and 10 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,271,612 (Tanaka et al.).

1. Patentability of independent claims 1 and 10 over Ichiyama and over Tanaka et al.

Claims 1 and 10, as amended, each recite, *inter alia* (underlining added for emphasis):

a vent connecting spaces around the joint between said fixed shaft and said flange to each other is provided inside said fixed shaft;

This limitation is not disclosed or suggested in Ichiyama or Tanaka et al.

The Examiner states that passages 74 of Ichiyama (Figs. 1 and 3) and passages 26 of Tanaka et al. (Figs. 3, 4A and 4B) both act as both a circulation hole and a vent. Applicant understands this to mean that the Examiner is equating the passages 74 of Ichiyama and passages 26 of Tanaka et al. to the vent recited in amended claims 1 and 10. Additionally, the Examiner states that dependant claims 2 and 4, which previously recited, *inter alia* (underlining added for emphasis):

wherein said circulation hole is provided in said flange and said vent is provided inside said fixed shaft

and

wherein said circulation hole is a vertical groove provided on at least one of a side of said fixed shaft and a side of said flange and said vent is provided inside said fixed shaft

respectively, appear to be directed to allowable subject matter.

The limitation of "inside said fixed shaft" was, therefore, moved from dependant claims 2 and 4 into amended independent claims 1 and 10. Amended claims 1 and 10 recite that a vent connecting spaces around the joint between said fixed shaft and said flange to each other is provided inside said fixed shaft. The passages 74 of Ichiyama (Figs. 1 and 3) and passages 26 of Tanaka et al. (Figs. 3, 4A and 4B) are not inside a fixed shaft. For this reason, Ichiyama and Tanaka et al. do not disclose or suggest the invention recited in claims 1 and 10.

Accordingly, claims 1 and 10 are believed to be patentable over the applied references.

2. Patentability of the remaining dependent claims

The remaining dependent claims are believed to be patentable over the applied references for at least the reason that they are dependent upon allowable base claims and because they recite additional patentable elements and steps.

Conclusion

Insofar as the Examiner's rejections were fully addressed, the present application is in condition for allowance. Issuance of a Notice of Allowability of all pending claims is therefore requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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